

INITIATION RITES

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The next day the cooking preparations proceed in earnest. 881
Over a hundred women gather at Ponatlege and the 778
adjoining hamlet to prepare the taro. The men are busy 535
wrapping the fish in leaves and tending to the *liga*. The
only idlers are a few old men, some of whom sit and play
with the babies, while others are chatting in the men's
house. The food is left on the *liga* overnight, and the next
day sees the climax of the *malanggan* rites.

By the middle of the morning all the people of Lesu, 574
Ambwa, and Langania, and many from the more distant 484
villages of Libba and Tandis, and even a few from Fakmalak
and Laummasong, both of different language groups, arrive
at Ponatlege. Five or six hundred people are present. The
men and women sit around in a large open space in the
centre of the hamlet left free for dancing. The men sit on
the side nearest the enclosure and the men's house, while the
women are on the other side; even quite young children
observe this distinction. On the side where the women sit
a small temporary booth is erected to hold baked taro and
bananas. This is for the women who, if they are hungry
between dances, go in and eat. The men do not eat any of
this food, but wait until the rites are over for the day.
Everyone is anxious for the dancing to begin.

In come the first group of dancers, who are from Lesu. 292
Each man wears an elaborate mask, a grass or rather leaf
petticoat, and a red shirt. In the past, instead of the red
shirt, which he now buys especially for this occasion from 439
the trade store on a near-by plantation, he painted his body 302
red from the waist up so that his identity might remain
concealed. As each dancer enters, an old man blows from his 789
hand some powdered lime, *lest*, in front of the performer, to
make him dance well. The dancers enter in couples, except
the first man who acts as a leader, escorting in each pair of
dancers. When all have appeared, they dance together in
circle and line formation. The dance is a very strenuous

the inhabitants of the east coast of New Ireland from Kavieng to Karu, a district for many reasons eminently suitable for the study in question. In the first place, it had always been, and still is, one of the most important centres in the Territory for the recruiting of native labour. Scattered along its coast are many of the most flourishing plantations in New Guinea, the owners of which depend on local natives for the bulk of their labour supply—a dependence specially marked just now owing to the depression in the copra market, which compels industrial organizations to observe the greatest economy. The immediate advantage to the planter of local labour over labour recruited from other parts of the Territory is the saving of recruiting fees, passage moneys, transport and incidental costs through his being able to secure the natives he requires from the villages around his plantation, and the advantages to the native population of being able to place its available workers on some plantation near their villages are obviously so great that everything should be done to encourage conditions that make it possible. A further inducement to the studying of the population in this region is the position that has lately arisen owing to an increasing European interest in local lands for agricultural purposes, resulting during the last few years in numerous applications for leaseholds, of which many were being held in abeyance until an inquiry could be made into the future land requirements of the native inhabitants. In German times considerable areas of land were alienated and freehold grants given to European planters, who utilized these rights to such advantage that here and there along the coast are numerous productive and exceedingly valuable coco-nut plantations. The land in the district is suitable for the cultivation of coco-nuts. It is traversed from end to end by a road good enough for motor traffic. It has a large population, the climate is excellent, and there are several anchorages in convenient centres where small steamers are able to pick up copra—the very conditions to encourage European settlement. Now arises a question which cannot be determined until a close survey has been made of the population itself; i.e., whether in the interests of the natives and their future requirements any further land should be alienated, a point of especial importance since the natives themselves now own coco-nut groves, which they are being encouraged to extend, while at the same time they are receiving instruction from officials of the Department of Agriculture in the planting and maintaining of such properties.

Just as in matters of land and labour, so in the question of trade, the natives are brought closely into contact with the European population. It is to the European that the native sells the products of his coco-nut groves, his surplus native food, pigs, fish, fruit, fowls, eggs and in some places trochas-shell, snail shell and bêche-de-mer, for which he receives in return money, rice and other European foods, and trade

•439 goods. Each year this economic bond between European and native residents grows stronger, and the two racial interests become more inter-dependent.

651 The native inhabitants pay taxes to the Government, and keep
491 150 miles of road between Kavieng and Karu in proper order for motor traffic, each village group being responsible for its own section.

797 These are some of the principal developments in the material life
177 of the people as a result of European settlement. On the cultural and social life, chiefly due to mission influence, additional far-reaching changes have taken place, and these increase as the missions expand. Two mission organizations are now operating in the district—Roman Catholic and Methodist. The principal Roman Catholic stations are at Lemakot, Munuwai and Lemasong, and those of the Methodist Mission are at Maiom and Pinigindu.

177 The progress of European organizations has transformed the life
182 of the natives, whose indigenous institutions have either died out or, like the *mailigans*, are tottering to extinction with scarcely a hope of surviving the present generation. The people of coming generations will have to fit into the social and religious fabric being woven for them by the driving force of European industrial, religious and administrative control now thoroughly established in the district.

114 With the object of making the survey in question, I left Rabaul
121 on Saturday, 23rd March, 1929, and on Monday, the 25th March, commenced work in the villages between Kavieng and Karu. Completing the preliminary census on the 11th May, I came back to Rabaul to tabulate my notes, and, this done, returned to the east coast villages, where I remained from the 1st June until the 26th June, investigating special phenomena indicated by the tables.

121 Thus the work was divided into two parts, firstly, an enumeration of the population in their villages, and, secondly, an investigation of the figures together with social and religious features seemingly of value to the issue.

125 A specimen of the form used in recording the names and demographic features of the inhabitants is appended. (Appendix 1.) In regard to the actual method, however, a generalized explanation is necessary.

361 The inhabitants live in small family settlements along the coast-line,
621 excepting mountain and forest groups, who reside in the bush. Each settlement has its own small plot of land, clumps of coco-nut trees, and two or three living houses. They are scattered along the whole coast-line a few yards or 100 yards or so apart, according to the political boundaries and space available. A group of several family settlements forms a political division, which is administered by the Government with the aid of local natives of influence and repute, who are appointed Lulusi and Tul-tul and officiate under the supervision of the District Officer according to authority set out in the Native Administration

attacking shoals of fish come near to take their share. The canoe-men 226
throw in their fish bait to lure the sharks within range of their loops
of cane, and then they catch them, and after knocking them on the
head haul them into the canoe.

Small gardens are made wherever fertile ground can be found, and 241
in one or two places there are sago swamps where sago is cultivated
and reserved for times of dry weather and food shortage.

In olden days trading was actively carried on between some of the 439
coastal villages and Tabar. Nowadays the coastal and bush people
barter with fish and taro, pigs, &c.

A shell money currency is used for trading and ceremonial purposes. 436
It consists of smooth flat discs strung on fibre strands. At Kandan
this is known as *lerene*. One kind *lerene da lolot*, a small red shell
money, is made in the islands north of Kavieng and traded down the
road; another *lerene do liklik*, a small white shell money of lesser
value, is made in the vicinity of Lemasong and Pinigindu. On the
Lelet Plateau a different shell money *lerene dasilok* occurs. It is of
great value locally. Nothing was known of its origin, and there is
relatively little of it left. When they showed it to me, I recognized it [17]
as the red shell money used in the D'Entrecasteaux group of Papua
where it is known commonly as *sapi-sapi* and *bagi*. Similar shell
money also occurs in the British Solomons. It probably found its
way into the district during the "Blackbirding days" of olden times
when many natives from this coast were recruited and taken to work
on the cane-fields of Queensland. One or two of the survivors were
met in the villages, still hale and hearty despite their age.

In this area there is still another kind of shell money *lerene*
bungabung made from white shell, the discs being larger than the other
forms. The origin of this is also unknown.

The record of my enumeration of the population was handed to 128
Mr. Charles H. Wickens, Commonwealth Government Statistician and
Actuary, for consideration. His comments thereon are sub-joined—

The three tables which are appended have been compiled from investigations
made by E. W. P. Chinery in the villages of the East coast of New Ireland,
and provided a mass of data which might be profitably availed of by those
wishing to make an intensive study of local conditions in New Guinea.

The first table is in respect of the components of population, and indicates
by males and females the conjugal condition of adults, the number of children
and adopted children and the number of village people who were absent at
mission schools or at work outside the village.

The second table deals with the issue and survival of children of a number
of unions in each village, and indicates the mortality of children during the
lactation period (approximately two years after birth) and up to the time of
the investigation, and number of children that were born per union and the
number that survived per union. The mortality of first-born children is also
shown.